

read it with some apprehension lest it might have something to do with some phase of French literary thought.

Naturally, therefore, I was glad when the first few lines showed that my fears were groundless.

It seems to me that you are eminently right in seeing that it is good to give a name to something of vital consequence, even though in a sense the name only expresses our ignorance. It is a curious thing in mankind, but undoubtedly true, that if we do not give such a name to our ignorance, most of us gradually feel that there is nothing to be ignorant about. Most emphatically there is such a thing as "decadence" of a nation, a race, a type; and it is no less true that we can not give any adequate explanation of the phenomenon. Of course there are many partial explanations, and in some cases, as with the decay of the Mongol or Turkish monarchies, the sum of these partial explanations may represent the whole. But there are other cases notably, of course, that of Borne in the ancient world, and, as I believe, that of Spain in the modern world, on a much smaller scale, where the sum of all the explanations is that they do not wholly explain. Something seems to have gone out of the people or peoples affected, and what it is no one can say. In the case of Rome, one can say that the stocks were completely changed, though I do not believe that this in the least represents even the major part of the truth. But in the case of Spain, the people remain the same. The expulsion of Moor and heretic, the loss of

the anarchistic and much misused individual liberties of the provincial towns, the economic and social changes wrought by the inflow of American gold—all of them put together do not explain the military decadence of the Spaniard; do not explain why he grew so rigid that, at first on sea and then on land, he could not adapt himself to new tactics, and above all, what subtle transformation it was that came over the fighting edge of the soldiers themselves.

For nearly a century and a half following the beginning of G-onsalvo's campaigns, the Spanish infantry showed itself superior in sheer fighting ability to any other i